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NEW TESTAMENT JUDAISM AND ITS GENESIS.

BY PROFESSOR GEORGE H. SCHODDE, PH. D.,

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With Malachi, the last of the minor prophets, the voice of inspiration and prophecy was hushed in Israel. The view that Daniel historically closes the Old Testament canon, and that we have a large number of Maccabean Psalms, are at best hypotheses, either not proved and daily becoming more and more disproved (as in the case of Daniel), or not capable of being proved in the nature of the case, as is the state of affairs in reference to the Psalms claimed for the Maccabean period. In itself the position that this or that portion of the Old Testament books is later than Malachi is neither objectionable nor dangerous; but the simple truth is that the existence of such later portions has never been proved by those upon whom the *onus probandi* rests.

The accepted chronology claims the year 433 B. C. as the date for the composition of Malachi; but it would seem that he wrote a little later. The centuries between this date and the appearance of John the Baptist, in whom the spirit of inspiration was again active, were very eventful for Israel, both externally and internally. The four centuries of silence witnessed a process and a development in the history of Israel's faith and religious convictions scarcely, if at all, equaled by any other period of the same length in the earlier records of the nation. That such is the case is evident from a mere comparison of Israel's faith, as we find it reflected in the New Testament, with the positive teachings of the Old. We need not consult the literary links that connect the two Testaments, to see that during those four remarkable centuries agents and factors were at work which changed quite radically the religion of the people, and made the Judaism of the New Testament period not a correct expression of the teachings of the Old, but rather a contradiction of these teachings. Christ, and with him the whole New Testament, opposes what was considered orthodoxy in his days, not because he was opposed to the teachings of the Old Testament, of which his contemporaries, principally the Pharisees as the official exponents of this orthodoxy, claimed to be the correct interpreters, but because he saw in this recognized system a radical departure from the Old Testament basis. Christ and his work are the fulfillment of Moses and the prophets in the divinely intended manner; and just in so far as the teachers in Christ's day oppose him, they oppose also the Old Testament teachings, to which his life and words gave the truest interpretation.

Just in what respect New Testament Judaism had actually departed from its true historical foundation in the Old Testament is evident from the Lord's teachings, and still more from the polemics directed against it by St. Paul and other writers of the New Testament. The sum of their charges is that the basis of the ground of hope, of righteousness before God, had been shifted from the true foundation to one that was false. The legalism, or the claim of a righteousness based upon an observance of the minutiae of the law of Moses, so characteristic of the New Testament Jews, is the *alpha* and the *omega* of their system. The law is their one and all; and upon obedience to it depends the sole hope of the Israelite.

The New Testament writers argue that the law was given, not to be an end in itself, but merely as a means to an end, namely, to the end that, in the recognition of the sinful condition of the heart, the child of God should flee to the gracious promises of God as these centered in the Messiah and his work; in other words, the law, according to St. Paul, was intended to be a "schoolmaster unto Christ." Instead of using it for this purpose, the Judaism of Christ's day had stopped short at the law, and had made it an end in itself, subordinating to it the words of prophecy, instead of making the law and the gospel the two mutually complementary portions of the one educational scheme recorded in the Old Testament pages. In this manner the whole character of revealed religion had been changed, and the principle of self-righteousness, or righteousness of the legal sort, had usurped the place of righteousness by faith, which already held supreme sway in the Old Testament dispensation. The attacks of the New Testament upon the teachers of the Old in that day were thus directed not against the use, but against the abuse of the latter.

This state of affairs suggests the problem as to how they entered into this condition. What is the origin and the genesis of New Testament Judaism? What were the causes and factors at work that were powerful enough to change so radically the faith of the chosen people? Evidently these false views that fell from the lips of Christ's contemporaries are not the notions of an hour, nor the mushroom-growth of a few years, or the whims of a school of philosophy, but represent the development and growth of decades and centuries. Undoubtedly the external history, the political ups and downs of the people, had not only a molding, but also a creative influence in the genesis of these peculiar views. The germs of the erratic view we must doubtless seek in the times of Ezra, and in an extreme interpretation, or rather misinterpretation, of his attitude toward the law. Recognizing the fact that the dire fate of the pre-exilic period was owing to the disobedience of the law of God by their fathers, obedience to this law became the war-cry of Ezra's reformation. We have no evidence whatever that this scribe himself purposed any other object than that which was in exact accord with the revealed intent of the law, but we have evidence in the post-exilic prophets that such incorrect positions were taken by some in his day, fundamentally occupying the same false grounds that we see later on in the New Testament so strongly fortified by the powerful system of the Pharisees and their adherents. This abuse of the truth by Ezra's cotemporaries was a step not unnaturally taken. The recognition of the observance of the law as the correct and chief means for effecting the ends of the Old Testament dispensation, easily brought with it, especially since the directing and correcting voice of prophecy was now becoming silent, an acceptance of the law as an end in itself, leaving out of consideration the real end it was intended to lead to. In this manner the age of Ezra already saw the beginning of what is completely finished and rounded off only in Talmudic Judaism.

The course of history during these centuries of silence, combined with the peculiar hopes and character of the people, was well calculated to develop these false germs, and make what seemed in Ezra's day only like a mustard seed grow into a mighty tree. Proceeding from the premises that obedience to God's law in itself, and irrespective of the ethical feature of this obedience, would secure for the Israelites the favor of God, and consequently the good things of this earth, and for the nation as such a favored and powerful position among the peoples of

the earth, the faithful in Israel found to their surprise that the actual course of their history was entirely different from what they thought they had reason to expect. With the single exception of a few years of political independence under some of the earlier Maccabean princes, during these four hundred years Israel passed from the supremacy of one Gentile nation to that of another. First, they were under the comparatively mild sway of the Persians; but nevertheless, in the erection of the temple and otherwise, they were compelled to wait for the Persian's permission. Then, after a brief Grecian supremacy, the Syrian dynasty of the Antiochian kings ruled, or rather misruled, Israel. Especially under the maniac Antiochus IV. (Epiphanes) were they compelled to drink the bitter dregs of persecution, and their sufferings were paralleled only by the early persecutions of the Christians; upon this, Syria, after a brief breathing spell, followed the Roman rule, which may not have been so cruel outwardly as was the Syrian, but which endeavored all the more to rob the people of their political and religious individuality. The people, who had hoped for so much on account of their fidelity, felt their disappointment keenly. In the Book of Enoch, written in part in the terrible days of the persecutions of Antiochus IV., the writer laments, "We hoped to be the head, and we became the tail." Other literary productions of that date echo and re-echo this thought; but the sufferings of the faithful made them only all the more zealous and all the more hopeful that their zeal would eventually be rewarded by the appearance of a powerful Messiah who would deliver his own, and establish a powerful kingdom of this earth with Jerusalem as its center. It is this line of thought that, among the New Testament Jews, so closely connects the idea of an obedience to the law, as the correct principle of revealed religion, and the carnal hopes of Israel for a Messiah of and in this world. These two thoughts and fundamental errors sprang from the same soil and grew up together, complementing and supplementing each other. The expression of these ideas is very frequently met with in the literature of the people in those days, especially in that remarkable and prolific species, the Apocalypses of the Jews, of which we have remnants yet in portions of the Sibylline Books, in the Book of Enoch, in the Psalter of Solomon, in the Apocalypse of Moses, the Ascension of Isaiah, and a few others. Probably the most characteristic of them all is the Book of Enoch. There, and in the others, the faithful are urged to continue steadfast in their obedience, being told that for such obedience the rewards shall not fail, that the days of the persecution are numbered. The Lord himself, or his Messiah, will come with great might and power, and will destroy those who maltreat the Lord's people; and the fidelity of the latter will secure its full reward in the Messianic kingdom. Such are the leading thoughts of all these works, modified according to the peculiar time and circumstances that surrounded the writing of the work. Thus, in the older portion of Enoch, written in the terrible days of Judas Maccabeus, the idea of a bloody vengeance on the persecutors of the people, through the intervention of God and his Messiah, is the all-controlling idea. In the latter portion of the book, written when the Herodian dynasty was seeking to introduce an intellectual rationalism into the religion of the people, and to establish an aristocratic indifferentism in the ruling classes, the Messiah is represented rather as a powerful teacher sent from God to establish, even by the use of the sword, the true wisdom and philosophy. The so-called Psalms of Solomon, written when Ptolemy had established the Roman dominion

in Jerusalem, paints the Messiah as a mighty king, the true son of David, who will destroy the rule of the wicked stranger.

What added fuel to this fire was the fact that the oppressors of Israel endeavored to rob the people of their religion. The whole period is one of constant struggle between the religion and culture of Israel, and the religion and culture of Greece. A Hellenistic party then always existed in Palestine and, chiefly through the Sadducees and others, exerted a powerful influence, even in royal and priestly circles. Antiochus IV. went so far as to order all the copies of the Scriptures found in the land to be burned; the Romans set up their eagles and images in Jerusalem, to the horror of all the Jews, who would not allow images to be made. These endeavors of the Gentile conquerors compelled the faithful all the more to cling to the legacy of their fathers, to the law and the other sacred books; hoping that, when the time of persecution should be over, and the people should have been tried as if by fire, then the hour of deliverance would come, and the true Israel, that had not fallen from the high estate of being God's chosen children, would receive their reward in the glorious kingdom to be established by the Messiah.

Such was the fate of the people, and such were the thoughts that filled their souls during these eventful years. In the light of these facts, it is not an historical enigma how the Judaism of Christ's day became such as it was. It is capable of a rational and historical explanation, and is the result of factors at work during the centuries between the two Testaments. Israel's fatal error during this period consisted in this, that the people, instead of following the word of revelation alone, allowed the hopes and fears, the joys and sorrows of the hour to warp their judgment and misinterpret the deeds and words of Jehovah. Consulting flesh and blood, and not the word of truth alone, in matters of faith and doctrine, will, in the nature of the case, ever lead to error more or less fundamental.

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS.

By PROF. WILLIS J. BEECHER, D. D.,

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OCT. 10. JESUS BEFORE PILATE. John XVIII. 28-40.

OCT. 17. JESUS DELIVERED TO BE CRUCIFIED. John XIX. 1-16.

OCT. 24. JESUS CRUCIFIED. John XIX. 17-30.

Who were the Jewish men who secured the death of Jesus? To what extent were their proceedings legal, according to the Jewish usages of the period? How do the usages thus exhibited compare with those described in the Old Testament?

The high-priest Annas, of the gospels, is undoubtedly the same whom Josephus calls Ananus the elder, and perhaps elsewhere Ananias. He was made high-priest by Roman authority, the 37th year after the battle of Actium, say, 7 A. D. (Jos. *Ant.* XVIII. 2, 1). He held the office about fifteen years, and was deposed by Roman authority. After a short time, his successor was deprived of the office in favor of Eleazar, the son of Ananus. Eleazar was high-priest for one year, and his successor for one year, after which Caiaphas became high-priest,